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FEAR OR SURPRISE ?

(Bhavanutha Naa Hridayamuna Ramimpumu)

By

P. K. SRINIVASAN, B.Sc.

(Sangeetha or Sahitya ? Which of the two is of greater importance ? A vexed question in the musical world though, it has certainly been agreed that Sahitya has its special import, conveying philosophic truth, expounding the exalted Upanishads, and elevating one to spiritual bliss by blending finely with the musical score. Especially in Saint Tyagaraja's compositions one finds the entire gamut of human emotions traversed and the fusion of Sangeetha and Sahitya total in the resulting Bhava.

It is, therefore, imperative that one understands the Sahitya, involves oneself in the Sangeetha, gets into the feel of the whole Kriti and sing not only for self-bliss but also for listeners' pleasure.

While this is so, different translations by various scholars lead to varied interpretations, sometimes contrary to one another.

We give below an account of one such Kriti. — Ed.)

The compositions of Sadguru Sri Tyagaraja are all like gems. Yet, some pieces shine with dazzling beauty emitting a brilliance *par excellence*. The Mohana Raga Kriti, *Bhavanutha* is one such. Alas ! We handle it thoughtlessly while translating and in the process introduce a 'kalanka' (blemish) for which there is no room in that sparkling diamond. This article is an attempt to point out the inappropriateness of the wrong translation.

Tyagaraja's command over the vocabulary, Teulgu or Sanskrit, was so rich that he could hit more than one bird in a single shot. Let us see how he achieved in this Kriti. The Pallavi runs as follows :

*Bhavanutha ! naa hridayamuna
Ramimpumu*

Badalika theera

Here the word 'Bhava' signifies Siva and so in the Pallavi he describes Rama as one praised by Siva. In the Anupallavi and the three Charanas, he concludes with the word *Kamalasam*. This word, by itself, carries no meaning at all. But when linked with the opening word of the Pallavi, *Bhavanutha* it becomes *Kamalasambhavanutha*, meaning one who is extolled by Brahma. Thus by keeping the Pallavi in tact, he is able to give a second dimension which is quiet different from the first one, i.e., Rama glorified by Siva and Brahma also. Not only that, the Saint reiterates the two letters 'Bhava' to give two other meanings in the two words of *Bhava tharaka* and *Bhavana-mu*. What a genius !

MAIN THEME

Coming to the main theme now, let us analyse the meaning of the song. In

the Pallavi he says, "Oh Rama! You praised by Siva! Please have your tiredness removed by residing in my heart and enjoy yourself." Here Tyagaraja has not given any indication of the nature or the cause for Rama getting tired. This he enumerates later in the Anupallavi and the three succeeding Charanas.

Anupallavi :

*Bhava tharaka ! naatho bhahu
balikina badalika theera
Kamalasam (bhavanutha)*

"Oh! Rama! the one worshipped by creator Brahma! You can carry us across the worldly life of 'Samsara'. You have talked a lot to me and so by this time you must be exhausted. Hence take abode in my heart and enjoy yourself."

Charana 1 :

*Pavanasuthapriya ! thanakai
thirigina badalika theera*

*Bhavanamu jeri nanu Verapinchina
badalika theera Kamalasam
(bhavanutha)*

"Oh! Rama, you are dear to Anjaneeya, the son of Vaayu. You have wandered much, searching for me. So you must be tired now. Please take rest!"

HOW IT FITS ?

So far translators have done a good job. But in the second-half, the word *Verapinchina* has been wrongly interpreted by them : "You have come to my house and frightened me and in the

process got tired. So please take rest to remove that tiredness."

Now, let us examine if such a translation would fit in well in the context of the song taken as a whole. Would this be in tune with the 'Kaviridayam'? Why should Rama take the trouble of frightening Tyagaraja to the extent of getting himself exhausted? That too, of all the persons, his own devotee! Would Tyagaraja get frightened on seeing Rama for whose darshan he had been praying day in and day out?

Let us ruminate on these points. As seen from the song the occasion for this is quite clear. Rama had made his appearance suddenly at Tyagaraja's house while the latter was in his usual devotional mood, immersed in the thought of Rama and Rama alone. It was a pleasant surprise for him to find Rama in his abode, a thing which he never expected. He had not made any arrangements to receive his Guest. He was quite upset at this, which he clearly states in the second Charana :

*Varamagu neivedhyamulanu jeyani
badalika theera*

"Oh! Rama! I have not offered you the best of dishes as Neivedhyam. I have not removed your tiredness, so you have to take rest."

Moreover in the third Charana he says :

*Prabala jesi nanu brochevanukonna
badalika theera*

"Rama, you have made me a famous man by spreading my fame in distant places and you have determined to protect me at all costs. So you

must have become weary while discharging these acts. Hence it is high time you took rest."

In this connection it is worthwhile to recollect the Kṛiti *Dasarathey nee runamu in Todi*.

CLEAR INDICATION OF MOOD

All these clearly indicate a mood of surprise and joy only, giving no room for being frightened. The word *Verapinchina* in normal sense means frightening and so most of the translators have adhered to it and interpreted the song accordingly. But *Verapinchina* has a special connotation too, viz., stunning or taking one by surprise with a jolt. This has to be taken in this song. The meaning of the song would then be perfectly appropriate with respect to the Anupallavi and Charanas.

The Kṛiti was published in 1937 in *Swadesamithran* wherein *Verapinchina* was translated as 'frightened'. To justify this the author had narrated a story, a hearsay, with a stamp of having heard it from a reliable source. The gist of the story may be given to illustrate how ludicrous one could stoop down to justify one's misinterpretation.

"Sri Tyagaraja was puffed up with vanity that none was equal to him as the chosen devotee of Rama. The Lord wanted to teach him a lesson and snub him. So, one day disguising himself as the royal jawan, he came to Tyagaraja's house with his retinue and informed him that as he was involved in some serious theft cases, he was under arrest and a warrant had been issued by the king, summoning him to appear before him forthwith. A crowd had collected by this time and started heaping abuses on Tyagaraja, while the soldiers

were threatening him. None was prepared to listen to Tyagaraja's plea of ignorance and innocence. At last, Tyagaraja's vanity was subdued when he prayed to Rama. There was a sudden flash of brilliance and he saw Rama in the place of the palace jawan. Overwhelmed with joy he asked Rama to forgive him for his vanity. This is referred to in this song, of Rama having come to his home and frightened him."

I leave it to the readers to judge how far this story could be tenable. There is no source in the history of Tyagaraja for such a thought of self-pride having occurred in his mind. In all his songs we find humility only. He was never harsh even to those who had caused him troubles.

MUSIC ASPECT

Now, taking up the music part of the Kṛiti : most of the songs of Tyagaraja have got a Bhava, i.e., feeling behind, a latent emotion and the music as well as the *Kalapramana* (tempo) of each are aptly suited to bring forth this dominant mood. If any of this is altered the beauty of the song will be marred. It is essential that those who render the songs should keep in their minds not only the meaning but also the bhava (emotion). They should get into that very particular mood of the song, be one with it and immersed in the music if they wish their rendition to touch the hearts of the listeners and have an impact.

As for the mood of *Bhavanutha* Tyagaraja is entreating Rama to come and reside in his heart to take complete rest. He is apologising for his lapses in not giving him a suitable welcome. He is imagining Rama to be very much

exhausted for reasons listed out by him. He pleads worshipfully with profound piety, while welcoming Rama.

This mood of the song is best brought out in slow rendition. But, unfortunately, it is sung by some in fast tempo. The music portion, as it is, might sound all right as Raga Mohana lends itself beautifully to fast as well as slow tempo. But what about the Bhava? The fast tempo is not suited for a pray-

yerful plea, an entreaty. The difference has to be felt by the individual who sings.

Let each singer experience the difference by singing the Kriti in slow and fast tempo and arrive at a conclusion. Tyagaraja himself points out, *Ilagani vivarimpa lenu — chala swaanubhava vedhyamey*, and let this serve as a yardstick.



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THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TYAGARAJA

"I did not know what music was, what a performance was; nor was I proficient in Tamil. I was ignorant of Lakshana, Lakshya, Sangeetha Sastra. Time was when I was not aware of the quality and value of the compositions of the musical Trinity. Why, as a young boy I got out in the middle of a performance of Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer exclaiming 'what is this music!' Little did I realise then that the same music was to draw me later like a magnet and the same singer

That is the humble confession Polagam Ramaiyya, better known as Papanasam Sivan, made at his presidential address at the Music Academy, Madras when he was conferred the title of Sangita Kalanidhi.

A frail-looking minstrel going round the streets during the month of Margazhi (Dec.-Jan), singing the praise of the Lord, pouring forth music with his heart and soul at an hour when men and women preferred the cosy warmth of the

"AUSPICIOUS DAY"

"It is the time of the Sapthasthanam festival at Thirupappazham. Lord Pranatharthihara is expected to pass through the village at any moment. Panchapakasa Bhagavathar, the doyen of Harikatha performers, waits for the Lord and offers the customary worship when the palanquin comes along; by and by, he retires into his cottage and waits as Bhajana parties pass his door one after another. It is 4 p.m., yet Bhagavathar has not taken even a drop of water. Those about him look at his tired face with anxiety. Suddenly Bhagavathar rises up and rushes into the street to greet and offer 'panakapuja' to the leader of a particular Bhajana party. Bhagavathar prostrates before him, washes his feet, offers him buttermilk and 'panakam', and goes round him as a mark of respect. As the party moves, Bhagavathar exclaims 'சிவன்வான், இன்று ஒரு சுதினம்-தன்யோஸ்மி.'"

— R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar

whom I snubbed become my first Guru. Knowledge dawned on me and I realised what precious gems, the Trinity have bestowed on us. To this day I value and worship them and derive great pleasure in rendering the gems ... I owe this enlightenment to Trivandrum Krishna Bhagavathar, Keezhvelur Ramachandra Iyer, Manjakkudi Devaraja Iyer, Pazhayavalam Subbaier, Moongilkudi Kannuswami Iyer and others."

quilt — that is the picture one conjures up whenever one thinks of Papanasam Sivan. But behind the frail exterior what a versatile musician, composer and above all a Bhakta was hidden!

A performer par excellence, a versatile Kalakshepakara, and a composer of class, yet his passion was for the Bhajana tradition. Inspired by Manivachaka Kavi's "Theruvu Thoralar", he took to the streets to sing to his heart's

content and propagate the message of music and the concept of Bhakti. His mentor in the Bhajana tradition and one who moulded the composer he became, was none other than Neelakanta Dasar of Trivandrum where Ramaiyya migrated to, after his father's death.

TURNING POINT

His mother's passing away in 1910 was another turning point in his life. Resigning himself as a recluse, he became a wanderer, and for seven years he moved from place to place pouring

gazhi bhajan rounds in the vicinity of Kapaleeswarar temple in Mylapore, were uplifted by the tremendous experience of the song statements that came tearing through his frail frame with the force of musical revelation".

For all that, he was neither a Sivan by name nor a native of Papanasam. The holy ashes he smeared on, the Rudrasha he wore and the Shiva Nama on his lips earned him the popular name "Sivan". Besides, the appellation 'Sivan' was associated with men of God — a Bhakta like Ramaswamy

"ECSTASY — ITS FRUIT"

"Chidambaram Srirangachariar, a distinguished Kalashepakara, is driving in a jutka along a street in Mannargudi en route a village on the other bank of the river. He is told that Sri Sivan is performing "the Siruthonda Nayanar Charitram." Bhagavatar gets down and stands for a while, listening to Sri Sivan's Harikatha. His accompanists grow restless at the delay. Bhagavatar reluctantly got into the jutka and went for his performance. The patron was a little irate over the late arrival of the party. Bhagavatar made up for it by the excellence of his performance. The patron was so overjoyed that he presented a big diamond ring. The recipient exclaimed: "This is the fruit of listening to a Siva bhakta for a while."

— R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar

forth devotional music. It was through his soulful Bhajana, a regular feature in all temple festivals, that he stole the hearts of his listeners. By his highly imaginative, devotional and spiritual music he entranced the multitude that thronged to listen.

Writing about Sivan and his bhajana, a confrere said that "Sivan was a musician of the class and dimension, which occur only once in many decades. Those who have heard Sivan's inspired spells of singing during the Mar-

Sivan, Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan, Nilakanta Sivan etc. And his stay in Papanasam with his brother for well over a decade made him almost its native. Hence Papanasam Sivan, who became almost a household name in the south and whose songs were on the lips of everyone.

FLAIR FOR CREATIVITY

Sivan's emergence on the musical scene was almost a Godsend. Steeped in the traditions of Bhakti cult he

helped revive popular interest in classical music by employing the evocative Tamil as his vehicle of expression and composing songs shorn of concert mannerisms. He not only revived the Bhajana tradition but also elevated classical music giving it a fillip in more than one per-

As a musician, Sivan had a flair for creativity, a perennial quest for beauty and he sprang surprises on his listeners. His interpretation of the Kritis of the Trinity was a class by itself, and following Konerirajapuram's high-pitched, high-spirited style of singing he cast a spell on the listeners. His repertoire

MELODY SUPREME

"It was the year 1912. A vast crowd was listening to Nagaswaram Chinnappakkiri at the annual Brahmotsavam of Sri Rajagopalaswami at Mannargudi. Suddenly a young man made his way through the crowd and whispered into Pakkiri's ears 'வந்து விட்டாங்க.'"

At once Pakkiri handed his Nagaswaram to his disciple and rushed behind the palanquin of the Deity. That particular day was noted for an endless stream of Bhajan parties. So, Pakkiri had to pass a number of them before he reached the one he was after.

"Curiously enough, that Bhajana group had attracted a large crowd. As Pakkiri listened with eager anxiety a Namavali beginning with

'பதித பாவன ராம
பசுபதி விநுத நாம
பரிபூர்ண சத்யகாம
பரஞ்ஜோதி பரந்தாம'

In Todi fell on his ears. The scintillating voice charged with emotion rent the air with a crescendo of matchless melody. Pakkiri was not slow to assess the noble music and the rare reaction of the crowd. He followed the Bhajana party for a time with tears in his eyes. There was a call from the temple authorities and he had to resume his place in front of the Deity. "நான் எப்படி வாசிப்பது?" is all he said to himself".

— R. Rangaramanuja Ayyangar

forming forum, viz., the concert, the theatre and the cinema. In a way, what Tyagaraja achieved during his time, linking the Bhajana tradition and the art music, Sivan endeavoured on a more democratic set up. No exaggeration that he deserved to be hailed as the 'Twentieth Century Tyagaraja'.

was vast and wide and included Keertanas and devotionals of Gopalakrishna Bharati, Vedanayakam Pillai and others.

Following his debut in 1918 at the Tyagaraja festival at Tiruvaiyyaru with Papa Venkataramaiah (violin) and Tanjavur Vaidyanatha Iyer (Mridangam), he

performed at various places. Yet, as he himself had said once, his mind was bent on the bhajan rounds only.

As a composer he came to be held in high esteem. The simple stride, lucidity of expression in popular diction, breathing an air of Bhakti and Vairagya so characteristic of Dasar's compositions gave an impetus to the composer in him. The first song that sprung forth from him was *Unnai Tudikka Arul Tha* in Kuntalavarali. It was "an embodiment in Raga and Tala of the feelings of my melted heart", he had said.

ELEGANT STYLE

The master-composer he thus flowed into, his compositions came to bear an indelible imprint of his outlook and personality. Simple in style, elegant in gait, Sivan's compositions have few words but convey profound philosophy. His music, to put it in common parlance, is popular music with classical vitality. Sung in their perspective his compositions draw one nearer to mysterious realms where earthly bliss tends to merge in spiritual ecstasy.

Every piece is an inspiration in itself, the outpouring of the heart that experiences the emotions. They came forth spontaneously with some inner promptings. To quote him : "I started composing songs without being conscious of doing so. This is not any doing of mine but the doing of the Lord who is hidden in our hearts and prompts us doing it. For the purpose of composing these songs I gave expression in them to several trials and experiences of my own and brought them out."

It is relevant here to refer to his film compositions which, in his own estima-

tion, were neither lyrics consciously composed for a tuned melody nor melody designs patterned with precision for a composed text, but a spontaneous fusion of tune and text evoking the particular Rasa.

SILVER SCREEN

Incidentally, strangely enough, it was the silver screen that brought publicity and wider acclaim to this master, steeped in chaste traditions of classicism! Though it showered material prosperity on him the beneficiary was the film industry. His association with the film world helped emancipate cine music to classical heights.

His compositions range in structure from simple cantos to artistic pieces of aesthetic excellence. Compositions like *Vaanor Vanangum* (Ananda Bhairavi), *Aandavane* (Shanmukhapriya), *Paraa-mukam* (Karaharpiya) and *Unnai Thudikka* (Kuntalavarali) are devotional hymns of simple tone colour.

The agony of the mortal yearning for a union with the Supreme Being is expressed in *Esane Inda* (Chakravakam), *Kali Teerumo* (Todi) *Sivakama Sundari* (Mukhari) and *Nee Irangayenil* (Atana). The Ragas in themselves evoke anguish and the lyrics only accentuate it.

Some of his pieces excel in aesthetics and artistry, comparable to those of Tyagaraja and Dikshitar. *Taamasamen* and *Kaartikeya* (Todi), *Kaanakkan Koti* (Kambhoji), *Kapaali* (Mohanam), *Idadu Padam* (Khamas) and *Saravana Bhava* (Shanmukhapriya) are a few instances.

Every phase in *Kanakkan Koti* is an embellishment enhancing the beauty of Kambhoji while its brilliance shines

through the poetic excellence of the lyrics. The enchanting chords of Mohanram are captured in the descriptive *Kapaali* reminiscing the elegant contours of Tyagaraja's *Nannupalimpa*. Both these Sivan's Kritis were inspired exultations sung at one of the Mylapore Temple festivals.

The leisurely gait and the fairly complex musical setting of *Kaartikeya* raises it to Dikshitar's vilambakala kritis.

There is a general feeling that his entry into the film world watered down the devotional and classical aspect of his creations. Though in cine music light-veined melody is irresistible a few of them Papanasam composed were in classical idiom. Pieces like *Maaramanan* (Hindolam) and *Iniyoru Kanam* (Sriranjani) evoke the same response as *Kaanakkan Koti* or *Gajavadana*.

POLITICAL AWAKENING

Sivan, the patriot, had quite some contribution to make to the political awakening of his times. He was re-

ported to have opened political meetings with renditions of *Navasiddhi Petralum* or *Malaigalile Uyarmalaiyai Maghizhndariyum Nadu* etc.

Sivan had reportedly composed about 2500 songs in 75 Ragas and some 400 and odd have been published in the 4-part *Keerthanamalai*.

He had the fortune of listening to his own songs by maestros some of whom learnt them from him. "Having composed them out of His grace, I have had the pleasure of listening them being sung by musicians out of their own desire and this, I think, is a great fortune that the Almighty has blessed me with", he said.

Though the frail figure is no more, he lives among the musical fraternity and thousands of Rasikas in the 'gems' he offered them. In this year of his birth centenary let his compositions ring through every concert hall and every "Maada Veedi".

— SULOCHANA RAJENDRAN

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KARNATAK MUSIC: STATE OF ART

By

LAKSHMI KUMAR

Technologists construe the term 'state of art' as synonymous with modernisation and upgradation. In fine arts, this term denotes an assessment of the vitality and growth-potential of any particular branch. In fine arts, equal emphasis is laid on the preservation of pristine purity as on improvisation and development. Characteristics of cultural movements are conditioned by ever-changing ethos. The survival of Karnatak music as a system over a five-century time-span is indicative of its inherent ability to adapt in accordance with periodic values. Our aim is a cultural causerie and not a post-mortem of cultural casualty.

The Golden Age of the Trinity ended one hundred and fifty years ago. A booster-period of the mini-Trinity (Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Patnam Subramania Iyer and Kunnakkudi Krishna Iyer) was seen in the latter half of the 19th century. What is the track record in this century?

EVOLUTION HAZARDS

The first major event was the publication of the magnum-opus of Subbarama Dikshitar, the *Sangeetha Sampradaya Pradarshini*. Even in the foreword, the author enunciates his adherence to Venkatamakhin's system. Protagonists of Govindacharya successfully suppressed the propagation of Venkatamakhin's views and smothered vibes generated by Dikshitar. Efforts were wastefully directed towards com-

parative evaluation, instead of cohesive synthesis. Internecine rivalry led to the casualty of both systems. Is this a laudable achievement?

In the following period, the era of Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer and Ramanathapuram Srinivasa Iyengar, lakshana and lakshya were given equal importance. Nowadays, Lakshana is sidelined. We witness raging debate on the point as to whether the science of the art or the art of the science is more important. How many performing artists are composite Lakshana-Lakshya Vidwans? Was not the surfeit of laya suppressed, to impart more Ranjakatva? Is the in-depth examination of Raga-Lakshana, an ongoing process? It is but an annual farce, where individual predilections annihilate investigative inquisitiveness — an example thereof being a don's denunciation of an uncommon 'Sa-ri-ga-ma-pa' prayoga in a Poornachandrika composition. Lakshana requires periodic codification, simplification and standardisation. What have we to show in this regard?

CONCERT CONCEPT

The 'cutcheri' concept was there in the latter half of the last century, with emphasis on Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi. Allotropic modifications and abbreviations were introduced in the nineteen twenties, manifesting as an aesthetically acceptable form. How many of us can gulp Todi being sung

for eight successive days or Saveri for seven hours? Concerts were contracted to a duration of four hours, which to many, nowadays, is an ordeal. Naina Pillai used to devote about forty-five minutes after the RTP to singing of Tiruppugazh verses. Cutcheri-planning became an art, mastered by some Vidwans like Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar. The essence of a Raga or the Bhava of a Kriti was presented in a facile manner. Elaboration was not at the cost of audience-interest. Have we exhausted all stocks of Tiruppugazh, Thevaram and Prabandha verses, Padams, Javalis, Viruttams and classical Tillanas to feel the need for Bhajans, Abhangs and Tillanas in Ragas alien to Karnatak music?

Innovation was noticeable in the forties and early fifties. Rendition technique apart, Graha Bedha was a new concept to demonstrate vocal felicity. Madurai Mani Iyer's Swara-structuring was novel. Manodharma was at its maximum level. Imitation is the order of the day — is it at the cost of innovativeness?

Musicians of yesteryears had unlimited repertoires and took care to eschew repetitiveness. It was not uncommon to know thirty compositions in Todi and at least a baker's dozen in Bhairavi. One recalls observations made by the redoubtable N. M. Narayan, reviewing a concert, when he stated that the compositions to be rendered were a 'foregone conclusion, it was only the sequence of presentation that sustained interest, why repetitiveness?

BANI Vs PUBLIC RELATIONS

Stylisation or Bani had quite some influence. Did not Alathur Brothers, Mani Iyer, G. N. Balasubramanian and

some others hold their own against senior stalwarts like Semmangudi, Musiri, Chembai and others? This was the manifestation of healthy respect and competition — the contest being in terms of artistry. Nowadays, public relations and paraphernalia matter more, as a result of which some knowledgeable and deserving performers get sidelined and allow the spotlight for comparatively sub-standard performers.

Accompaniments are meant to embellish presentations by the main artist, either by way of 'Anusarana', faithful reproduction or by way of repartee. It is said that once Sharaba Shastri and Tirukkodikaval Krishna Iyer presented a memorable concert through complementary music centred on the Prati-Madhyama of Kalyani. How often do we get to hear something like the Naina Pillai — Rajamanikkam Pillai, Balasubramaniam — Chowdiah or Alathur-Papa Venkatramaiah combinations? Percussionists tend to overshadow prime artists or appear to have a penchant to plod and not to play.

LAYA-HARMONY

The dosage of any element has to be limited. Detractors of Naina Pillai were critical of the overdose of 'Kanakku'. Karnatak music nowadays has a surfeit of cost-accountants and laya has become 'pralaya'. Why should compositions end in a cacophonous climax? Laya, really means harmony.

Talking of harmony, one excellent weekly presentation of the past, the 'Jantra-Sammelana' of the All India Radio has faded into memory.

Is it that stagnation or decay has crept in and that doomsday is not distant?

Members of the audience nowadays are by far more knowledgeable, comprising more cogniscenti than afficiandos, as was not in the past. Pucca and pre-rehearsed presentations are the mode. Tastes have changed, indicators are for the better. A judicious admixture of the old and new is sought for. Performers are required to build their rapport with their listeners and cannot take it for granted. It is only Vidwat coupled with Ranjakatva that appears to be appreciated nowadays.

Critics have, broadly speaking, played a constructive role. Critics are classified as meek, moderate and man-eaters.

Constructive criticism by moderates has had a salutary effect. Artists have to perform to satisfying standards, if reviews have to be favourable. This was not there, twenty or thirty years back.

Linguistic chauvanism, which raised its ugly head at least appears to be contained for the present. Karnatak music encompasses four languages. Dictional purity is not at a discount and verbicide is waning.

Controversies are avoidable, no doubt. Yet, some of the recent ones like that on the creation — discovery of Ragas and another on Swati Tirunal have brought to the fore, both sides of cases. Opinions no longer can be imposed, listeners cannot be bulldozed.

The lure of lucre is there for all to see. Has this ameliorated performing standards?

Contemporary textual-tradition is reviving. Journals like the *Sruti* and *Shanmukha* do have a wide readership base and provide information and reference sought for.

Youth are interested in learning, not merely listening to music. No doubt, the bug to perform has bitten many, leading to a package-deal pedagogical practice. How many will survive after premature exposure? Is it advisable to stifle interest and prescribe Guru-Kula-Vasa now?

Karnatak music has undergone democratisation. It is no longer the Nada-Vidya of saints, the entertainment medium of the Royal Durbars, or the privilege of some select Sabhas. It is easy to be critical of the Meccademies of Madras or the Medinas of Mumbai. Sabhas are the temples of today and tomorrow, for Karnatak music. There is at least one Sabha in Bombay, a la the bygone Jagannatha Bhakta Sabha of Madras, where many artists perform for a piittance to please an enlightened audience.

Karnatak music is, perhaps, in a state of flux. The judgement on the state of art is left to be implied.



A DIVINE COMPOSER *

The sleepy village of Tiruvisainallur, situated about 8 kms. from Kumbakonam, on the banks of Kaveri, comes alive with a 10-day festival rounding off on the Tamil month Kartikai Amavasya Day. The whole hamlet vibrates for the ten days with soul-stirring bhajans and music performances. Devotees of music, bhajana mandalis, senior vidwans of Karnatak music from all over the country assemble here every year to pay homage to Sri Sridhara Venkateswara Dikshitar, better known as Sridhara Ayyavaal.

"It is sweet to hear of Bhakti. Sweeter still it is to work for Bhakti. Sweetest of all is it if one could become Bhakti." So goes on observation. The saints preached Bhakti, 'the perfect surrender to and trust in the Lotus Feet of the Lord' and lived to show the easiest and shortest way to god-realisation, i.e., the Bhakti Marga, the Sangeeta Marga — singing the praise of the Lord, His name.

BHAKTI MARGA

No words could better describe this Sangeeta Marga than those Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore poured out, bringing out 'the yearnings of the suppliant devotee before the Master Musician' who is none other than God Himself :

"I know Thou takest pleasure in my singing: I know only as a singer I come before Thy presence.

"The light of Thy music illumines the world. The life-breath of Thy music runs from sky to sky. The holy stream of Thy music breaks through all stony obstacles and rushes on. My heart longs to join in Thy song, but vainly struggles for a voice. I would speak, but speech breaks not into song, and I cry out baffled. Ah, Thou hast made my heart captive in the endless meshes of Thy music, My Master."

HARMONY WITHIN

Quoting this and expatiating on this at his inaugural address at the annual conference of the Music Academy, Madras, once, the late Shri K. K. Shah observed, "Scientifically interpreted, sound, air medium and hearing lead to an understanding of a harmony in the individual. If man discovers this harmony in himself he can seek it between himself and the cosmos And this is what music leads to ultimately."

The saint-singers were aware of this harmony and devoted their "entire energy, talent and experience" to Sangeeta, the emotions of which captivated even those who did not know music or the language in which it was sung. And they advocated congregational singing evolving what has come to us in variegated forms of Nama Sankirtana, Sankirtan, Bhajana tradition etc. The padhati is the same, i.e., singing in group the Lord's glory. And Nama Siddhanta that it ultimately turned out to be was

considered the most efficacious means of salvation.

The Bhajana tradition which had enjoyed a long unbroken history in the south had a fillip during the Maratha rule in Tanjore in the 17th and 18th centuries. Connoisseurs and patrons of art and literature, some of whom being themselves composers, the Maratha rulers contributed considerably towards the promotion of fine arts. Especially King Shahji (1684-1711), a patron of scholars, gifted lands and houses in Tiruvisainallur to 46 illustrious scholars among whom Sridhara Ayyavaal's father Lingaraya, a Telugu scholar, was one. The very rechristening of Tiruvisainallur as Shahjirajapuram stands as an evidence to this historical fact.

A lesser known composer though, Ayyavaal had a wealth of contribution to make to the world of music. One of the fine exponents of the Bhajana Tradition that preceded the era of Art music and a contemporary of Sadasiva Brahmendra and Bodendra Sadrugu Swamigal, Ayyavaal popularised "Nama Sankirtana" as a form of worship and the most efficacious 'Sadhana' of salvation.

Lingaraya gave his son traditional education in all fields expected of a brahminical scholar of those days, and suffice it to say that Sridhara Venkatesa was a fit co-student of the great yogin and philosopher Sadasiva Brahmam. Both had their spiritual learning in the inspiring atmosphere of the village, under the erudite scholar Ramabhadra Dikshitha. Sridhara Venkatesa was always referred to by his contemporaries as Ayyavaal. He became one of the honoured favourites of Shahji of Tanjore, and was the author of the his-

torical 'kaavya' *Sahendra Vilasa*. His literary achievement was chiefly in the field of bhakti through his compositions Siva Bhakti Lakshna and Siva Bhakti Kalika, as well as in his inimitable and innumerable bhajan songs.

He authored immortal works, such as *Aakhyaa Shashti*, *Saarendra Vilaasa Kaavya*, *Sivabhakti Kalpalatika*, *Aarti-hara Stotram*, *Jambunathaashtakam* and *Gangaashtakam*. The Telugu Kirtana, "Bhakte Sridhara Venkatesa Guruvaraya" in Kedaragowla Raga is sung in his praise.

MIRACLES

Miracles in the lives of saint-singers cannot just be ignored or brushed aside. They had their own significance. They could be inferred as providential messages emphasising the one and the same fact that 'true devotion alone matters and that caste, status, wealth and mere learning are of little avail'.

Sridhara Ayyavaal was a regular visitor to the famous Mahalingaswami temple at Tiruvidaimarudur, just across the river Kaveri and about two kilometres from his village. It is said that daily he used to have his food only after worshipping the deity at the temple and offering food to some devotees. Once, owing to the floods in the river he could not cross over to the temple as usual. Disappointed at his inability to offer worship, he went without food, and fell asleep at night. The Lord, who was touched to see his devotee sleeping without food, appeared in the form of the temple priest in Ayyavaal's house and offered prasadam to him. And Ayyavaal who could not see the priest

*Based on a report appearing in The HINDU.

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returning in the rain offered him dakshina as well as new towel to protect him from the rain.

The next day when the temple priest asked Ayyavaal about his absence at the temple on account of the rain, Ayyavaal narrated the incident of the priest himself giving him prasadam at his home. When the priest opened the door of the sanctum sanctorum, both Ayyavaal and the priest saw the towel adorning its lingam in the temple, and the dakshina lying nearby.

GANGASNANAM

The more celebrated of the miracles performed by Sridhara Ayyavaal, which has contributed to the annual conduct of the music festival ending on the Amavasya day in the month of Karthikai, goes thus : Ayyavaal had to perform the annual Shraadh ceremony of his father and while returning home after a holy bath in the Kaveri, he found a person who had not eaten for many days and happened to belong to a lower class. Ayyavaal took him home and gave him the food prepared for Brahmins for the anniversary function. The orthodox villagers considered the act as a sacrilege, and said Ayyavaal would not be allowed to perform the ceremony unless he took bath in the river Ganga to wash off his sin. They decided to boycott the anniversary ceremonies too.

Ayyavaal did not lose heart and with his unflinching faith in God told the

villagers that he would bring Ganga to the village that very day. He proceeded to the well behind the house and addressed Mother Ganga in a series of stirring verses called *Gangashtakam*, and to the amazement of the villagers the water level in the well rose rapidly with a gurgling sound and soon started overflowing. Ayyavaal who took bath in the holy Ganga water that rose in the well, proceeded to perform the ceremonies. The Brahmins of the village, watching from a distance, boycotting the ceremony, were in for a greater surprise. Three young priests appeared from nowhere, and went to the house of Ayyavaal. The clarity and mastery of the three priests in chanting the various Manthras, took everyone by surprise. And when after the anniversary function, the priests left the house, a section of the militant orthodox Brahmins followed them with the idea of taking the three priests to task. Their chagrin turned to fear when they found them entering the temple to disappear from sight. No doubt the three Brahmins were the trinity Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, who had come to help their devotee in distress. From then on, the entire village started paying their full unstinted homage to Ayyavaal.

FOOD FOR ALL

The practice of offering food to all those who came to the Math started. And even today, during the 10-day festival, everyday hundreds of devotees who come from far and near are given food in the morning and night.

DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHT CLASSICAL FORMS IN KARNATAK MUSIC*

By
N. S. RAMACHANDRAN

It may be said that the appeal of music is two-fold, aesthetic and emotional. The former predominates in classical music and the latter in other varieties, such as light classical, light and so on. The essential characteristic of classical music is its concern with technique, governed by the rules and conventions of the art, the enforcement of the grammatical discipline and the achievement of a total effect which yields an aesthetic satisfaction in the listener, the experience being related to what is basically an intellectual response.

DIRECT PERCEPTION

Classical music demands a well-trained and cultivated mind, with an adequate artistic background to reveal its beauties and to communicate its impact. But in contrast to this form stands the type of music which is emotional in content, where the technique recedes into the background and yields place to the direct perception of the message hidden in the melodic creation and communion with the psychic expression conveyed in the language of musical sounds.

Classical music requires intellectual concentration and by the inherent laws of emotional equilibrium, reflected in artistic expression, a modified form emerges as a relief, wherein music soothes the mind, without exerting the

purely intellectual pressure of art on it. The devices of classical music may be there but these means are employed towards the realisation of Rasanubhava or joy of emotional experience. This slant in the application of music is part of a historical process giving rise to the form known as light classical. Accordingly, in the early periods of our musical evolution, the Marga forms came to co-exist with Desi types and the tendency persisted and gradually broadened into the development of different categories besides classical music.

EMOTIONAL ACCENT

The nature of light classical music can best be appreciated if we consider the variety of forms prevalent in the sphere of contemporary Karnatak music. In addition to the well-known classical compositions, known as Kritis and Kirtanas, the repertoire of the typical South Indian musician includes Javalis, Tillanas, Tarangas, Devarnamas, Ragamalikas etc., which may be described as light classical forms. Though the compositions in these forms are usually set in the Ragas and Talas employed in classical music, they are considered to be light in quality, with the accent on the emotional appeal of the lyrics and its musical setting, in contrast to the elaborate treatment of classical pieces according to the rules and conventions of technique like Swaraprasthara etc,

The light classical types in Karnatak music conform usually to the structure of compositions in classical music and are marked out as light in quality by the virtue of the emphasis on the emotional appeal of the lyric and "light" treatment of the musical setting. In classical music the composition is usually rendered according to the technique, which has been developed traditionally and it is usual to render Sangatis as arranged by the composer and also Kalpanaswaras and Neraval for an Avarta selected from the composition. For instance, according to the Sampradaya, Kalpanaswaras and Neraval are not rendered for Javalis, Tarangas, Devarnama, etc. The lilt of the song and the underlying mood (Bhava) is brought out in Javalis, Tarangas, etc., and the intensive elaboration according to classical technique is avoided in the treatment of these pieces. The classical build is there, but the stress is on the Ranjaka aspect.

The classical element is balanced by the light and the aim of the resultant mode of treatment is to achieve enjoyment of the musical content in the "light" vein and not to exploit the piece from the classical angle. Hence this variety is described as light classical, partaking the nature of both light and classical music within the same framework, the "light" or enjoyable quality becoming the predominant factor.

'CREATIVE' EPOCH

The trend in composition, between the era of Sarangadeva and the popular Kirtana-karas who made enduring contributions in the regional languages from about the 14th to the 18th centuries, was largely a movement away from the dominance of an intricate va-

riety of rigid classical forms towards freedom in expression, a simplification in structure and the deliberate use of music to project the thought of the song-maker. The ramifications of the Prabandha with its angas and their innumerable permutations were gradually getting replaced by a new harmony in fashioning the basic designs in the art of composition. The old order could be seen in this long period of transition to change, yielding place to a new one which transformed the shape of composition in a wonderful variety of ways, giving rise to a charming profusion of new forms in response to the urges of creative art.

JAVALIS & TILLANA

The Kirtana form was congenial to the new requirements and its intensive application led up to the Kritis and Padams of the great masters on one side and also, in another direction, to the development of song-types which came to be employed as handmaids of expression in a devotional setting, dramatic narration and dialogue and also for heightening the element of entertainment. It was in this manner that the Javali, the Tillana, the Taranga, Devarnama and Ragamalika emerged to enrich the resources of Karnatak music.

The Javali is comparatively a latter-day development. It would appear that the Padams of Kshetragnya and other masters, requiring a musicianship of no mean order for proper rendering came to be considered justifiably as major musical compositions and as against this highly evolved type, the Javali was considered as a lighter form, expressive of Sringara, with the music lilting and lively in tempo, easily grasped and appreciated by the audience. Javalis

*From AIR Symposium Papers.

consist of a Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charana and they are composed in pleasing Ragas, of a highly 'ranjaka' quality, like Khamas, Jenjhuti, Kapi etc. Javalis were composed from the latter part of the 19th century and amongst the composers the names of Dharmapuri Subbarayar, Tiruppanandal Pattabhiramayya, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar, Tirupati Vidyala Narayanaswami, Dasu Sriramu-lu and Tacchur Singarachariar are well known.

Tillanas are variations of sections of Prabandha forms, made easy and attractive for the audience. In this type again we find the composer making his own adaptation of a complicated classical structure with the main objective of providing a pleasing contrast to the disciplined and scientific elaboration of classical music. In Karnatak music, Tillanas made their appearance in their present form in the 19th century. Their evolution may be traced back to the *Sangita Ratnakara* in which we find several permutations of the basic features of the technique applied to different types of compositions.

DOMINANT BHAVA-RAKTI

In the modern version, the Tillana is usually in Madhya Laya and is written in Telugu. It consists of Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charana with elaborations to Jatis and Swara prayogas. Within this frame-work, there is ample scope for the display of the imagination and skill of the composer. Tillanas have been written by illustrious composers including Maharaja Swati Tirunal, Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer, Patnam Subramania Iyer, Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar, Mysore

Sadasiva Rao, Veena Seshanna and others.

The next type covers a wide range of compositions including Taranga-Kirtanas, Darus etc. Shri Jayadeva (12th century) made an epoch-making contribution in his *Gita Govinda* which started a new era in the field of composition in South India. His Ashtapadis are sung even today in all parts of South India with fervour and devotion. The pieces are rendered in dance performances and sometimes in music concerts. The Ashtapadis are unique for the harmonious blend of word, though-content and music and may be said to serve as models *par excellence* of music in which Bhava and Rakti are predominant.

The Taranga Kirtanas of Narayana Tirtha (1580-1680) are in the same category and are cherished all over the South. Narayana Tirtha was born in the Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, and he settled down on the banks of the Kaveri near Tanjore. In the South his songs are believed to carry benedictions and are rendered in weddings and in bhajana gana. The compositions are in Sanskrit and are divided into Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charana. Taranga Kirtanas are composed in different well-known classical Ragas and Talas and according to the Sampradaya, they are rendered so as to bring out the latent bhava, without extemporising Kalpanaswaras and Neraval or Sahitya Vinyasa. The primary consideration is to depict the pieces with feeling and express the emotional content adequately.

In the same category we came across Adhyatma Ramayana Kirtanas of Munipalle Subramania Kavi

(1730-80). The Kirtanas are set to 'Rakti' Ragas like Kedaragowla, Kam-bhoji, Anandabhairavi etc. The Talas employed are Adi, Jhampa and Chapu. The pieces have Pallavi, Anupallavi and Charana, but the Charanas are as many as 10 in some cases and their structure is elaborate.

DARUS' INDIVIDUALITY

The next major group of compositions in this category includes the Darus occurring in Yakshaganas and Ganyatakas of the Bhagavatamela troupes. Pravesa Darus, Varnana Darus and Samvada Darus occur in those works and they have their own musical individuality. The *Bhamakalapam* of Sid-dhendra Yogi (1600-1700) contains beautiful compositions of this type. Similarly the compositions in the Ganyataka works of Melatoor Venkatarama Sastri, Sahaji Maharaja, Swati Tirunal, Arunachala Kavirayar, etc., and the songs in the great Kuravanchi Natakas afford excellent examples of the light classical variety. Sadasiva Brahmen-dra's Kirtanas and the different kinds of Utsava Sampradaya Kirtanas and Divyanama Kirtanas may also be mentioned in this connection.

DASARPADAS

The works of the Haridasas of Karnataka constitute a magnificent collection of songs known as Dasarapada or Devarnama. Starting with Shri Narahari Tirtha in the 13th century down to Shri Jagannathadasa in the 18th century, these saintly bards enriched not only the Bhakti literature of our country but also made substantial contributions to our musical system. Shri Purandhara Dasa is the most celebrated

amongst them. His works are marked by a charming and scintillating excellence of Sahitya and Sangeeta and they stand out as typical examples of the Devarnama group of compositions. The Devarnama Kirtana consists of Pallavi, Anupallavi and usually several Charanas set in popular Ragas and Talas. The musical arrangement is easy and fluent and the rendering concentrates on the portrayal of the inherent bhava.

RAGA KADAMBA

Ragamalika is a very attractive and popular form of light classical music. Its derivation may be traced back to the Raga Kadamba Prabandha and allied varieties mentioned in the *Sangita Ratnakara*. Amongst prominent examples may be mentioned the great works in this category by Sri Ramaswamy Dikshitar (1735-1817), the father of Sri Muthuswami Dikshitar, viz., the Ragamalika containing a hundred and eight ragas beginning with the words *Natakadi Vidyalya*, a Ragamalika of 44 Ragas on Meenakshi, and another of 48 Ragas on Venkatesa of Tirupati. Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Chaturdasa Ragamalika is a masterly composition. The Ragamalika covering the 72 Melakarta Ragas by Maha Vaidyanatha Sivam is an outstanding achievement. Swati Tirunal has also composed Ragamalikas, which are cherished by the public. As in Varnams, even in Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi, the concept of Ragamalika has been applied and the attractiveness of the form is seen in the Anibaddha rendering of slokas and 'verses' called Viruttams as Ragamalikas in music recitals. It may be seen that the form of light music covers a vast and inexhaustible store-house of musical treasures.

STUDY OF INTERVALS IN MUSIC *

By

NAGALAKSHMI SANTHANAGOPALAN

The power of music, when its notes are arranged in certain patterns, elevates human beings to the region of absolute bliss. Music is based on relations of sound and a careful study and analysis of the numbers governing these relations, bring us closer to the science of numerical symbolism. Though numbers correspond to metaphysical principles, their application to physical reality through certain laws, can be experienced through music. It is only in this fine art that the connection between physical reality and abstract principle is plainly apparent. Hence music was deservedly considered as the key to all sciences and arts by the ancients and it is also a link between metaphysics and physics, through which universal laws and their various applications could be understood.

The essential basis of music is melody. Music is first forced to select artistically and then to shape for itself the material on which it works. Painting and sculpture find the fundamental character of their materials, form and colour in nature itself which they strive to imitate. Poetry finds its material ready, formed in the words of language. Architecture has indeed also to create its own forms, but they are partly forced upon it by technical and not by purely artistic considerations. Music alone finds an infinitely rich but totally shapeless plastic material in the tones

of the human voice and artificial musical instrument, which must be shaped on purely artistic principles, unfettered by any reference to utility as in architecture or to the imitation of nature as in the fine arts, or to the existing symbolical meaning of sounds as in poetry. There is a greater and more absolute freedom in the use of the material for music than for any of the arts. But certainly it is more difficult to make a proper use of absolute freedom than to advance where external irremovable landmarks limit the width of the path which the artist has to traverse. Hence also the cultivation of the tonal material of music has, as we have seen, proceeded much more slowly than the development of other arts.

EXPRESSION OF POWER

The first fact we meet in the music of all nations, so far as is yet known is that alterations of pitch in melodies take place by intervals and not by continuous transitions. The psychological reason for this fact would seem to be the same as that which led to rhythmic subdivision periodically repeated. All melodies are motions within extremes of pitch. The incorporeal material of tones is much more adopted for following the singer's intention in the most delicate and pliant manner. Graceful rapidity, grave procession, quiet advan-

ce, wild leaping — all these different characters of motion and a thousand others in the most varied combinations and degrees can be represented by succession of tones. As music expresses these motions, it gives an expression also to those mental conditions which naturally evoke similar motions, whether of the body and the voice or of the thinking and feeling principle itself. Every movement is an expression of the power which produces it and we instinctively measure the motive force by the amount of motion which it produces. This holds equally and perhaps more for the motion due to the exertion of power by the human will and human impulses than for the mechanical motions of external nature. In this way melodic progression can become the expression of the most diverse conditions of human disposition.

The melody has to express a motion in such a manner that the hearer may easily, clearly and certainly appreciate the character of that motion by immediate perception. This is only possible when the steps of this motion, their rapidity and their amount are also exactly measurable by immediate sensible perception. Melodic motion is change of pitch in time. To measure it perfectly the length of time elapsed and the distance between the pitches must be measurable. This is possible for immediate audition only on condition that the alterations both in time and pitch should proceed by regular and determinate degrees. The alteration of pitch should proceed by intervals because motion is not measured by immediate perception unless the amount of space to be measured is divided into degrees. The individual parts of a melody reach the ear in succession. We cannot perceive them all at once. For a clear and

sure measurement of the change of pitch the means left is only the progression by determinate degrees. This series of degrees is laid down in the musical scale. We consequently find the most complete agreement among the music of all nations from the earliest to the latest times, as to the separation of certain determinate degrees of tone from the possible mass of continuous gradations of sound, all of which are audible and these degrees form the scale in which the melody moves. But in selecting the particular degrees of pitch, deviations of national taste become immediately apparent. The number of scales used by different nations and at different times is by no means small.

TONIC — THE CHIEF TONE

The theory of the sensations of hearing belongs to natural science and comes under physiological acoustics. Acoustics is the science of sound. This physical acoustic is essentially nothing but a section of the theory of the motions of elastic bodies. In physical acoustics the phenomena of hearing are taken into consideration solely because the ear is the most convenient and handy means of observing the more rapid vibrations. Musical scales and modes have been arrived at by the development of the principle of tonality which connects all the tones in the piece of music by their relationship to one chief tone called the tonic. The different music systems do not oppose each other but, on the contrary, they complete each other as they all spring necessarily from the same fundamental laws of which they exploit different aspects. Like the forms in language, the musical modes are permanent marks of

*Based on the lectures delivered by Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. S. Ramanathan.

the tradition to which a people belong. Striking examples are the importation of Mongolian scale into China by Genghis Khan or that of Persian modes into North India.

MUSICAL INTERVALS

The octave of 1200 cents is divided into 12 semitones. Occidents use the scale of equal temperament in which the octave is divided into twelve equal intervals or semitones with the necessary consequence that the frequencies of some of the swaras are either slightly below or above their true ratios. Indian and other Oriental music follow the scale of just intonation which is limited to one single key and aim at making the intervals as accordant as possible with both one another and with the harmonies of the key note. The number of possible musical intervals is obviously unlimited but because of the limits of discrimination of our ears and of the consonant properties of some ratios, the number of intervals utilized in practical music is limited. For a musical evocation the simple acoustic intervals are sufficient. The 22 Srutis with their commonly accepted definitions and frequencies are inadequate for bringing forth full aesthetic effects of our music. The use of quartertones and microtones imparts a peculiar charm, colour and flavour to Indian music. Theoretically, the number of intervals figuring in Indian music has been estimated by various scholars in varying numbers. The number 22 represents the bear minimum of Srutis that has been actually used in Indian music from ancient times. This has been given by Palkurki Somanatha Kavi.

There are more than 150 intervals in an octave of 1200 cents, most of which

have Greek names and are of only academic interest. In music however we are concerned only with those intervals which actually occur in Ragas and which bear a concordant relationship with one another. Since we know only twelve Swarasthanas we talk of a Raga only in terms of its Swarasthanas. Musicians are not, generally speaking, conscious of the precise frequency values of these Srutis, but keeping the melodic picture of the Raga in their minds, they are able to sing or play. There are many Ragas wherein notes having different frequencies outside the 22 Srutis occur. In fact, each Swarasthana has a number of relative frequencies with specific names. The septimal notes do not come under the 22 Srutis.

It will be of interest to study a few notes with their specific names, relative frequencies in ratio and cyclic cents. The note Rishaba in Pun-nagavarali is flatter than the Suddha Rishaba by 27 cents. This interval is called subminor or septimal second, the relative frequency of which is 21/20 in ratio with the cyclic cents being 85. The note septimal or subminor third (relative frequency 7/6 and cyclic cents 267) occurs in Anandabhairavi: In this Raga Gandhara in the phrase 'SG' is flatter than the Pythagorean minor third by 27 cents. In Hamsadwani one can come across the note septimal or super major third which is sharper than the Pythagorean major third by 27 cents. Septimal or subforth of relative frequency 21/16 and 471 cyclic cents specially occurs in Kalyani where Panchama is a prominent note. As septimal fourth is the seventh harmonic partial of Panchama and appears in Gamaka, it should not be confused with Suddha Madhyama. The eleventh harmonic is

a note associated with Madhyama of Begada and bears the relative frequency 11/8 in ratio and 551 in cyclic cents. The resonant Madhyama in Vachaspati is the septimal or subminor fifth with relative frequency ratio of 7/5 (583 cyclic cents). This note is particularly noticeable with a resonance when one ends with the note Madhyama — as in the phrase Pa-Da Ni Da Da Pa Pa Ma in Vachaspati, though there is a slight touch of Panchama in the Madhyama Swara. Grave superfluous fifth which is the 25th harmonic and of relative frequency 25/16 in ratio and 772 cents appears in Saveri in the notes Rishaba and Dhaivata sung as Andolika gamaka.

'TONES' & RASA

The Nishada which is peculiar to the Ragas Ritigoula and Suruti is the septimal seventh — seventh harmonic — a natural note. The relative frequency of this characteristic note is 7/4 (969 cents). This note is prolongable. The Nishada occurring in Ahiri is prolongable and is sharper by 54 cents than the minor seventh (Kaisiki Nishada). Ahiri Nishada is called Meshaquah's 27 quarter tones, relative frequency ratio of this note is 11/6 (1,050 cents). This Nishada occurs in the

Melakarta Vakulabharanam and its Janya Ragas. The enigmatic Nishada of Begada is the Grave major seventh of relative frequency ratio 50/27 (1,067 cents). This Nishada is sharper than acute minor seventh by 49 cents.

In this brief article an attempt has been made to bring out the important aspects of musical intervals so that the readers and connoisseurs of music can appreciate the theoretical aspects involved in bringing out all the effects of a Raga. Disregarding small differences in intervals will lead to grave consequences with regard to the deeper effects of music. Music in its sublimity has a strong appeal not only to the aesthetic appreciation but also to the emotions and can stir these to the greatest depth. Each Raga is supposed to bring out one of the nine sentiments. The attribute of Rasa for every Raga is based on the scientific fact that certain notes produce certain feelings depending on the frequencies. Since it is the inter-relation of notes that determines the emotion of a Raga it is essential that one should understand the subtle differences in intervals of the notes so that the effect of the Raga can be brought out in full measure.



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CULTURAL SCENE IN BOMBAY

Classicism and traditional purity have a perennial import of their own, particularly in the area of fine arts. For an interpretation, Art is an evolution over a period of time, thanks to the contribution and embellishments provided by artistes and stylists in their professional calling. While trends and influences tug at each other in the process, true artists are never guilty of violating in any manner the basic infrastructure on which the fine edifice has been nurtured into form. In the case of D. K. Pattammal, to put it short, her name is synonymous with traditional sanctity. Her concert has always, right through her career, carried an excellent sense of proportion, an unquestioned sense of refinement and an unparalleled laya precision working out a scholarly model. Her concert in the third week of September (aegis : Shanmukhananda Sabha) was an avowed confirmation in this regard.

SCHOLARLY MODEL

Opening with Pantuvarali Varnam ("Samininne"), followed by a couple of crisp numbers, DKP glided into Hari-kambodi ("Dinamani vamsa") which was beauty spelt out. The melody was articulated in good detail with due emphasis on Chatusruti Dhaivata and Kaisika Nishada, one hugging into the other — a leisurely sequence that she chose to dwell on. It is rarely that this melody receives its dignified treatment at the concert platforms, nowadays. But, DKP, on her part, understood the

need and made it an important passage in her recital. One would like to re-capitulate that glory for all time. Kharaharapriya (composition of Srivatsa) was another beautiful number that registered well. Short but complete in character, Madhyamavati was taken up for pallavi in 'kandanadai'. Physical age makes its noticeable impact, but DKP's scholarship and 'gnanabhava' successfully resist so as not to allow the concert dwindle into a flop.

Rukmani on violin gave an energetic boost throughout. T.A.S. Mani and Rajagopal team (mridangam-ghatam) provided good rhythmic support. Mani has a correct feel of the vocalist's style of rendering. His performance proved the role of rhythm in a concert, the way as it should be. His 'Thani' was spicy, traditional and crisp. There was no running into rough weather in the name of innovation, which currently is a craze with many upcoming percussionists.

HIGH POTENTIAL

Trichur Ramachandran's vocal performance on October 8, as usual, presented its colour of costume jewellery. While he, no doubt, tries to emulate the great GNB's style, the original still eludes him. The grandeur, dignity, laya precision and the unique aesthetic aura of his master's genius have been only partially assimilated. No doubt, GNB is inimitable. But Ramachandran has the potential to reach the senior vidwan's stature. Will he make it, having had

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GNB's grooming ? Of the different items presented, Purvikalyani ("Minakshi") and Kambhodi ("Evarimata") stood out the best. His voice throughout was pretty clear and niraval and swarapras-thara at the sequence ('Bhakthapara-dheenudanuchu') in Kambhodi, was well handled. "Sitamma" (Vasantha) was projected in GNB's characteristic speed and tempo.

Violinist, Shivakumar gave a satisfactory support. Bhaktavatsalam and Vaikom Gopalakrishnan (mridangam and Ghatam) gave a good rhythmic boost. It was felt, Bhakthavatsalam could have been less noisy on his instrument at certain points. His rhythmic essaying bear out good clarity. Vaikom Gopalakrishnan makes himself a good accompanist and his performance literally glides in and out, warp and woof with the flow of the song.

The previous day we had the Veena recital of Sangita Kalanidhi Mysore Doreswamy Iyengar. Although not spectacular in any sense for an assessment, the veteran had something to offer in good, sober and richly classical form. It was a welcome relief and a whiff of fresh air at a time when speed, fastness and tension are ruling the roost. He was assisted by his son as second veena, while Umayalpuram Sivaraman provided sober supporting rhythm.

BEWITCHING MANDOLIN

Mandolin Srinivas, the only master at his instrument impressively presents himself on each occasion. His command over his instrument is great. He has successfully adapted the available advantages of the instrument to present

a speedy rendering of Karnatak classical numbers. The bewitching impact of his recital is mainly due to reasons twofold. First, a characteristic verve he provides thanks to the speedy numbers he handles. Next, he is gifted with an astounding command of Karnatak rhythm. What generally musicians take several years of practice to achieve, Srinivas has captured for himself at a very young age. He has a correct feel of contemporary taste and approach of the general audience which he cashes in and makes himself the supreme artiste. Srinivas' inaugural concert of the Silver Jubilee Year finale on Oct. 13 was splendidous. Kedaragoula Varnam, Hamsadwani (Varanamukha), Kokilavarali ("Samugana") were a few of the items well rendered. Nagasvaravali was a class by itself and Srinivas will linger in the memory of audience for quite sometime on that account. Kanyakumari (Violin), Rajarao (Mridangam) and Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam) provided able support contributing to concert totality.

On October 21, we had the cutcheri of Seshagopalan. In keeping with his usual standards, Seshagopalan came with a bang providing material for mixed reactions. While a sound rhythmic grip predominantly runs through his recital emanating thunder, heat and excitement, the concert under reference was rather mellowed in form and sober in character, Kalyani Ata Tala Varnam gave a good start. Karnanarajani (Muthiah Bhagavatar composition) was delightfully rendered. San-karabharanam ("Ethudanalachite") stood out the best. For all his skills and talent, perhaps certain quarters might suggest that he would do well to eschew rhythmic bombast and divers-

ty on melody essence and interpretation in order to sustain his popular appeal and ever-shine innings in the professional field.

STAR ACCOMPANISTS

Mysore Nagaraj, now an experienced violinist, exhibited good confidence and acquitted himself creditably. He is, sure, heading for the front rank. Sriram Subbaraman, Bombay-based artiste on Mridangam, proved by his performance that he is a match for any senior musician. Rhythm gets spelt out in noteworthy clarity at his fingers and as an accompanist he clearly understands the vocalist's style of rendition. The current craze for overdoing rhythm by young artists is not in him. Vaikom Gopalakrishnan is too well known for his proficiency on Ghatam. He can be teamed with any mridanga vidwan for any concert. He plays a good complementary role and takes the concert to a glamorous culmination from point of view of rhythmic effect.

The concert of Maharajapuram Santhanam (November) as usual pleasing which sustained the general audience and gallery till the end. Charukesi Varnam (Tamil), a composition of Tanjore Sankara Iyer in Saramati, "Sarasamukhi" of Muthiah Bhagavata (Gaudamalhar) were a few of the pieces on schedule. Although slightly deviating on the lighter side of musical pattern, it is to point out that Santhanam has sound potential in him to present wholesomeness and rich classicism. One would hope, the purists will not be let down in their expectations when the next occasion comes its way. Nagai Murail and Vellore Ramabhadran, the experienced accompanists did their part very well.

The second concert of the month was by Bombay Sisters, C. Saroja and C. Lalitha who showed their synchrony in delivery, diction and bhava, though on a louder side. Their Kambhodi ("Tiruvadi Charanam"), Simhendramadhya-mam ("Ninne Nammithi") and Todi RTP were scholarly. Tukkadas were well appreciated.

The Bharatiya Music & Fine Arts, Matunga, presented in the middle of November the concert of Geeta Raja. With a gnanabhava that is distinctly above the average, she makes a consistent headway while interpreting Ragas. Compositions are rendered in well-trying-out workmanship and purity of form. Svaraprasthara bore out a sense of proportion in the matter of size and free from unmeaning gimmicks. Kalyani ("Ammaravamma") and RTP (Kiravani-Adi talam) were the best in the programme. Balakrishnan of Madras on Violin and Kalakad Srinivasan on Mridangam provided good supporting accompaniment.

Another pleasing vocal recital at the month end was that of Matunga Sisters (Lakshmi and Kalyani) that was arranged in Shanmukhananda main auditorium sponsored by CBS. The programme started rather late and had to be necessarily brief. One felt greater publicity ought to have been provided in order that the auditorium would not have experienced such a glaring number of empty seats. The artists on their part had planned out a repertoire in good verve to create impact. Purvikalyani by Lakshmi and Gaurimano-hari by Kalyani registered well in the brief duration of their recital. The accompanists arranged from Madras for the concert proved a disappointment.

Radha-Jayalakshmi's concert for Shanmukhananda on second Saturday in December lacked in splash and colour. Noticeably, the quality of their voice is lost; rather losing its 'sowkhyabhava' and once wellknown for its verve. One might say that age leaves its inexorable furrows.

A. Sundaresan's concert on Sunday pointed to its erudite status. His singing very much reminded of Ramanathapuram Krishnan's style. Kanada Varnam (Ata Talam) followed by "Ninnujuchi" (Saurashtram) and Varali Pancharatnam built up a good tempo. Sriranjini ("Marubalka") was ornate and well rendered. Kambhodi was the main item which was competently attended to. Svaraprasthara was spicy and erudite. T. S. Veeraraghavan (Violin), R. Venkateswaran of Bombay (Mridangam) and Sukanya Ramgopal (Ghatam) provided satisfactory accompaniment. Venkateswaran revealed good confidence in his performance and with more opportunities coming in his way he is sure to make a mark as a good accompanist. Sukanya's performance on Ghatam was of a high order.

In the Mini auditorium, on November 25 and 26, we had two concerts (aegis: Shanmukhananda Sabha), namely Ms. Lakshmi Ramakrishnan (disciple of Sangita Vidwan, A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer) and Kasturirangan (a product of Shanmukhananda Sangeeta Vidyalaya) respectively. Lakshmi rendered Varali Pancharatnam satisfactorily. Mohanan and Vasanta received good treatment. It is to mention that the artiste clicks well with the presentation technique. She holds out good promise.

Kasturi's cutcheri revealed the well formed innate potential in him which

has a marvellous promise for good dimensions. He has a sound sense of rhythm which he deploys in good flamboyance and aplomb. Svarajati (Yadukulakambhodi), "Bhajare rechita" (Kalyani) and Pallavi in Sankarabharanam were good items carried out in perfection. Singing at a higher sruti for his young, developing voice is considered a desideratum, for an opinion.

S. RAMACHANDRAN

★★★★★★

During the quarter under review the dance segment in Shanmukhananda's Silver Jubilee presentations had quite some imaginative, pleasing and spectacular shows in which top stars like Chitra Visweswaran, Vyjayantimala Bali and Hemamalini were billed

Featuring in the Festival finale, in Oct. 1989 Chitra and Vyjayantimala presented an Ekartha dance-drama and solo respectively. Both in Bharata Natyam style, they reflected the sustenance that tradition still holds in the artform and its adaptability to innovative stances within the bounds of the format.

Chitra's "Krishnanjali" was an Ekartha with a difference. It had all the depictions veering round the 'leelas' of the prankster. Yet, the focus was on mother Devaki — her state of mind when she heard about them, more or less an agonising ecstasy, where she could only lament over what legitimately was her 'joy' and which she was not destined to 'live'. This touching Vatsalya emerges in Kulasekhara Alwar's honeyed Tamil verses which Chitra imaginatively choreographed and danced, bringing out the contrast of 'visualising joy' and 'living lament', with a dramatic impact.

The mood of the melody for the mime was poignantly evoked by Visweswaran, and that projected one more husband-wife team on the dance forum.

Vyjayantimala's was leisurely paced, with nava-dominant, keeping Nritya to chatusra jamb and thus had a sedate glow. There was purity in the art, an involvement in delineation and agility in rendition. The Sancharis were quite succinct and with exquisite musical support from Shyamala Venkateswaran each of her items, such as "Vazhima-raiththirukkudu" (Todi), "Ekkalathilum" (Purvikalyani) and the Tanjore Quartet's Swarajathi "Sadaya Ikataala Jaatanuraa (Chakravakam) rose to heights of performing finesse.

Hemamalini's "Jai Durga" towards the close of September coincided with Navaratri and was not only a crowd-puller but a fabulous show too. It was the product of Hi-tech efficiency, an INT handiwork, directed by Ravindra Jain and playback stars like Yesudas, Suresh Wadkar and Kavita Krishnamoorthy pouring their melody into it, with Tapas Sen at the switchboard.

The costume ballet, choreographed from Shiv Puran, hymns and verses had flowing dance with folk flavour and classical elegance. The touch of Kuchipudi stances were aplenty and Vachikabhinaya too. Needless to say, Hemamalini in the lead sole stole the show.

Theatre had a lion's share in the crowning finale — the 10-Day Music-Drama Fete. Six dramas, three by Y. G. Mahendra's United Amateur Artistes and three by Marina's Rasika Ranga filled the bill. They were: "Romba Padichitten Sir", "Patti and the

Naughty Boys" and "Ithu Nyayama Sir" and "Engamma". "Nathnar Kalaham" and "Mamanar Saranagathi" respectively.

The "Ganamritha" publications are well-known in the academics and art circles of Karnatak music. The books written by Vidwan A. S. Panchapakasa Iyer, cover a wide range of compositions and composers. Popular among them are Varnamali, Tyagaraja Kritis, Purandara Dasa Devarnamas, Kamalamba Navavarnas with notations. To which he added a concise publication of theory entitled *Karnataka Sangeetha Sastra* in Tamil a couple of years. An English translation of it by T. T. Vijayaraghavan was released recently at a colourful function where Pt. C. R. Vyas a veteran of the Hindustani music, the chief guest of the day, commended the book as "a unique one equally useful to the students of Hindustani music".

A brief concert by A.S.P. Iyer following the release of the book brought out the erudition and vidwat of the musician.

A pleasant home-coming it was for Susheela Raman (now under Gurukulam of D. K. Pattammal) to have showed her mettle, melting the audience with her melodious evocation at the NCPA Little Theatre in October.

The Ragas and Kritis she presented had colour blends, rhythmic variations, and covered the emotional gamuts and depths. "Eti Janmamiti" (Varali), "Sari Evvaramma" (Bhairavi), "Paripahimam" (Jaganmohini), "Chalu Chalu" (Saveri) were rendered true to her Guru Parampara tradition and with her powerful voice Susheela added her own aesthetic sensitivity.

'Naad Tarang' — no new organisation but an instrumental contrivance, a hybrid of Sarangi and Bulbul Tara

The latter fixed on the Sarangi laid flat. Four main strings and 12 sympathetic strings fixed between the two, it is played like Bulbul Tara.

The adaptability of Karnatak music has let one more instrument to ascend the concert forum. The artiste who experimented on it and christened it is Shri Zachariah, a violinist of Dwaram school and a retired staff artiste of Akashwani, Bangalore.

Naada Brahman introduced Naad Tarang and Zachariah to Bombay Rastikas and for well over two hours one was treated to pleasing music by the artiste whose ancestry we learnt, is traced to that Tamil composer Vedanayakam Pillai. The artiste's feel for music and his fingers' fluency over the instrument spoke of his mettle.

The instrument has scope for orchestral ornamentation and contrapuntal aesthetics and he exploited them playing Bhairavi Swarajathi, Hamsadwani, Nalinakanti and Jyoti. Its capacity for Todi, Kambhoji etc. and delicate graces have to be assessed.

Padma, a promising alumnus of Naada Brahman, accompanied on the violin with confidence and competence. Percussion support was by senior vidwan Maniappan.

Though some initial skepticism marked the Sabha's proposal for advanced class coaching students with talent in

Navavarna, Navagraha, Navaratri Kritis, Swarajatis etc. it got off to a good start. The idea was not only to propagate these group kritis which very few know as a whole but also educate the students in Alapana, Raga nuances, their unique prayogas through the kritis. It needs no reiteration that these compositions are concrete forms of Ragas and that they help one 'meditate in music', and experience the fruits of such concentration.

"After the rendition of each Avarana Kirti, you feel the elation of having had the vision of the Devata," observed Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer.

The efforts of the Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya received a shot in the arm when the first batch of the students trained by Smt. Kalyani Sharma were presented by the Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer Trust at Narada Gana Sabha Mini Hall, Madras recently. The 2-day fare comprised Syama Sastri's Swarajatis on first-day and the whole series of Dikshitar's Kamalamba Navavarnas on the second day. Maharajapuram Sri Santhanam was highly appreciative of the standard of the rendition which he had opportunity to listen to earlier when he had come to the Sabha for his concert. And the Bishmapitha Semmangudi who graced the occasion on both the days blessed the teacher and the taught on their excellent performance. Said he, it is not very easy to teach or learn the Navavarna Kritis. Their very massive structure and slow pace dissuade many to learn. It is a great Sadhana that Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya has undertaken and accomplished.

— KINNARI

A GARLAND

South India has been the cradle of Karnatak Music and the nursery of illustrious musicians, composers, odhuvans and musicologists. The fertile soil of the river systems, robust cultural antiquity, congenial atmosphere, innate genius of the people and a great legacy of vibrant traditions had helped the flowering of Carnatic music. Rulers and the public respected the art and patronised the artistes. Renowned composers, vocalists, instrumentalists, odhuvans and others have thrilled music-lovers all along. Certain periods like 1750-1850 and 1900-1960 have witnessed a galaxy of all-time greats akin to the Golden Age of the Maurayas, Guptas and the Moghuls.

Artistes come and go in a never-ending chain. Fortune, recognition and publicity have crowned the lives of some but many a life is born to blush unseen and waste its fragrance of art and skill in the desert air of neglect, lack of opportunities and perhaps Destiny. Time with varied demands and pressures on it takes notice of but a few. Fortune with its spartan frugality confers its benign smile on fewer still. Even if some have been recognised and conferred with titles, how many of them are remembered and how many of us can recollect or recall the names of the Sangeetha Kalanidhis or the like? Gems of artistes with immense and noble contributions to the art have faded into anonymity with the passage of

time and the individual books or treatises on some are not easily available to all.

A Garland — Biographical Dictionary of Karnatak Musicians — vocal and instrumental and composers both of the past and the present which got on to the press for publication on the auspicious Vijayadasami, 1989, is expected to fill the lacunae. For the Western Music, Oxford University has published a voluminous compilation called *Baker's Biographical Dictionary* by Nicolas Slovinsky containing 13,000 biographies. It has run into seven editions. What it does for the Western Music, *A Garland* aims to do for Karnatak Music.

The project is a herculean task. Biographical details have been gathered from old publications, manuscripts, etc., and from artistes direct or by post. The compilation is still arduous. The sources are scattered and materials and data difficult to get at. After all that hazards, the finished product is bound to be a monumental thesaurus, a sought-for book of reference in music.

The project is the brainchild of Shri N. Rajagopalan I.A.S. (Retd.), who has undertaken it singlehanded. That speaks for his dedication, perseverance and love of classical music.

First Person Record

AMBUJAM 'CHITTI'

Ambujam Krishna, the facile composer, is no more. The shock of the reality is all the more piercing when you realise that only a couple of days before her death you were very much with her.

Memories take me back to the time, in the fifties, when I was introduced to Ambujam 'Chitti' (yes, she treated me as her niece) by my mother-in-law at Madurai. She took instant liking for me, showed keen interest in promoting me and showered me with not only her love but her lyrics too.

Born in an orthodox Iyengar family, Ambujam, a Home Science graduate from Delhi, came into the renowned TVS family at Madurai as Sundaram Iyengar's third daughter-in-law. Her mother-in-law was her own paternal aunt who was more than a source of inspiration to her 'creative' impulse. Who does not know about the TVS family's great deeds? I do not think there is any Vaishnava temple, big or small in South India, which has not benefited by TVS's generosity in general and Ambujam's in particular. She also took active part in the Ladies' Clubs in Madurai.

VERSATILE LYRICIST

Ambujam was an ardent lover of fine arts and a staunch devotee of Sri Rama. Perhaps it was her devotion to Lord Rama and her keen interest in music which moulded her into a composer.

She never planned nor aspired to be a composer. She was not known to have sat down with a pen and paper and toiled for a song. The lyrics came to her spontaneously. She was under a severe tension one day and was suddenly seized of a flow of thoughts which when she noted down on a paper turned out to be a meaningful song. With her husband Sri Krishna's consent she consulted senior musicians and got their confirmation, approval and acceptance of the piece. Since then she started getting inspiration and songs every now and then.

She was no musician herself to tune the lyrics. She sought the help of Sangeetha Vidwan Sri V. V. Sadagopan and got the compositions properly set to music. Her first book *Geethamala* which was dedicated to her mother-in-law was released in the fifties. Subsequently, her second and third books followed. She had composed a few hundred songs and the fourth book is under way.

My relation with Ambujam Chitti became closer when her daughter came to learn Bharata Natyam under me. My visits to their house became frequent and on occasions when Sadagopan and other musicians were there she would send for me. There would be discussion on her 'song-spurs'. She would also narrate the occasions which inspired her to compose the songs. As it was more of a natural flow for her there would be a stream of songs composed within a span of a

few days. At times there would be a full, no piece coming forth for weeks together.

Each of her 'creations' the various occasions inspired merit mention. But to cite just an instance : Once she went on a pilgrimage to Badrinath with her sister-in-law and other family members. While returning after the darshan of the Lord she was recapitulating the whole thing — the temple the God and the way the Puja was performed. And, lo, the song "Karu Mugil Vannam Kandar" was born. Her explanation of a particular line appealed to me very much.

"Murayaa Pukkum Sura Bhudararkku
Tiruvarul Tandida Badariyil Urai Undan"

In Tamil "Murai" means "the way of doing" as well as "in turn". Here it takes both the meanings. It is believed that in winter when Badrinath shrine is closed for six months, the Devas come down and do the Puja. So the Puja is done in "proper manner" (Muraiyaa) and the Puja is performed by humans for six months and the Devas for six months "in turn" (again Muraiyaa).

Staying in Madurai she had visited Azhagarkoil several times, but once when she visited the temple soon after the Chittirai Festival, she got the inspiration for a lovely song "Nindra Tirukolam Kaaneer".

Once I asked her if she could compose some dance songs exclusively for me. Her immediate answer was "I

wouldn't know". But after a couple of days she sent for me and handed over two songs best suited for dance. : "Sundiranai Azhaithu Vaadi" and "Velai Idendru Solli Vaaraai". These were later on set to music by my sister Sulochana Mahadevan. Later, Ambujam Chitti composed many other songs which were choreographed by several Gurus, senior dancers and myself.

Though all her compositions have excellent lyrics brimming with meaning, the ones in praise of Lord Rama are soul-stirring. The line

"Puviyil Adimai En
Paavangal Pollaavo..."

in the Uttarangam of the song "Engini Selvan" always brought tears in my eyes. I could give several examples like this. Incidentally, while most of her songs are in Tamil she has composed lyrics in Sanskrit, Telugu, Hindi and Manipravalam also.

Quite often, while conversing with me, she would turn wistful and rue the fact that she did not possess a musical mind to set her lyrics to tune. She would then humorously say that either I should gift my 'musical mind and singing ability' to her or she would transfer her 'lyrical mind' to me. It was therefore a dream come true, in a way for both of us, when I was able to write, compose and choreograph an entire book, *Nrithya Geethamala*, full of dance compositions.

Rajee Narayan



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MULTI-SPLENDoured 'HIRA'

Octogenarian Hirabai Badodekar who passed away in November last was more a socialist-musician. A singer-pioneer, a Gharana-loyalist, and a purist-traditionist, Hirabai was a trail-blazer too. She had many firsts to her credit. She took classical music to the common man, to the public halls, at a time when microphone was unknown.

While she was one of the protagonists who championed the cause of 'ticketed' performances, she strove for the respectability of the musicians and performing artistes. Like Rukmini Devi for Bharata Natyam and D. K. Pattammal to Karnatak music, Hirabai paved the way for female artistes to come on to the performing forum. She was the first female vocalist too who stormed the portals of male-dominated theatre. She brought into Natya Sangeet the soul force of classicism.

Daughter of the legendary Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, the father of Kirana Gharana, she had a disciplined training right from the cradle, so to say. Her mother Tarabai and her elder brother Sureshbabu Mane were her initial teachers. And under Ustad Wahid Khan's tutelage she flowered into a brilliant artiste of the Kirana Gharana, which she carried on with a passion and reverence.

The highlight of the Gharana was the Swaravistar. Its "enticingly sweet intonation captured the subtlest shades of the tone making music silken tender and delicate." Hirabai used to go rapturous over this, exploring into every nuance a note suggested, which required a voice with restraint and refinement, modulation and mellowness. How she cultivated such a vocalism and yet reached thousands of listeners without the aid of mike is a marvel of nature, a gift of God.

Her debut at a conference organised by Gandharva Sangeet Vidyalaya, Bombay, at the age of 15 was a starting point of a successful career and for decades she held sway performing through the length and breadth of the country and participating in the Samarohs etc.

Hirabai's propagation of Natya Sangeet was equally significant. She firmly believed that Natya Sangeet was an off-shoot of classical music, a quintessence of Khayal and she carried on proving it, playing musical roles, in the theatre which in the twenties and thirties were music-oriented, and major actors were musicians.

— Vocal

— Violin

— Mridangam

— Bharata Natyam

— Music Concert

— Music Concerts

— Music Concerts

— Music Concert

— Music Concert

She easily adapted herself to the 'culture' of singing into the mike and broadcasting. Only she felt that unless one was careful about one's vocal power, the cultivation of mike-oriented voice would lead to superficial humming and increase the tendency to musical ornamentation at the cost of deeper musical sensitivity.

A trail-blazer though, her views on musical education were tradition-bound. "Institutional coaching may awaken interest in students. But true musician needs not widening of repertoire or knowledge of Ragas alone. What he needs is the cultivation of right discernment which can be done through only Guru-Sishya Paddhati." And she trained quite a number of popular musicians foremost among whom are Dr. Prabha Atre and Saraswati Rane.

A recipient of many national awards and titles, this multi-splendoured Hira shone brilliantly on the musical firmament. The Gharana she held high has quite some veterans and her disciples to carry on her mission.

R. S.

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"MADHURA" SOMU

"Madurai Somu" he was by name, but "Madhura Somu" he became to thousands of his Rasikas. He swayed the audience with his rapturous music. He could satisfy the connoisseurs with vidwat and vivahara and common man with Janaranjaka. His music was wholesome. The absence of Dr. Madurai Somasundaram from December festival season would be felt by one and all. His end came too soon with a massive heart attack while he was visiting his native place Tirukkarukavur, near Tanjavur. The void he leaves behind in the music world is not possible to fill as he was a phenomenon whose surrender to the Muse was total.

Somu's music has always had that spiritual evocation and soulful involvement. Very few could match his enormous lung power, wide voice range and unflagging grit for performing any length of time. If his Todi was well worth going miles to listen to, his Darbari Kanhara could equally mesmerise a north-Indian audience. He was an 'Ustad' in every sense of the word. His virutham, his niraval, his swaraprastharas all had a stamp of his musicianship.

His "Gurunatha" between phrases and sequences was not merely a musical pause. It was an echo of his surrender unto his Guru. Chittoor Subramania Pillai, and of the soul to the universal Guru, the Almighty. It was a spontaneous interaction between the Guru and Sishya, a rare bond that bound them together. Reportedly, the Guru would sing only those songs nodded in approval by the Sishya. So much for Chittoor's conviction in Somu's musical acumen. Naturally, from playing Tambura to Thani cutcheri, Somu made long strides, imbibing his Guru's traditions and tenets. Little wonder that he specialised in 'full-bench' concerts on modern stage, keeping up the tradition his 'Gurupaattanar' (grand guru) Naina Pillai had evolved. Also, he propagated Pallavi in complex Talas.

Somu was known for his gesticulations, sometimes as wild as his vociferous "Gurunatha". Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer had once remarked at a function felicitating Somu : "He is not only an Ustad but also a Vastad", and narrated an incident that took place in 1945. Somu was going for an AIR broadcast, travelling by rail and road. On the road, the lone singer was waylaid but what a shock the robber had! The 'Payilvaan' in Somu chased the robber, shook him to his core, and retrieving his box arrived at the radio station just in time to go on the air! "That veeram shows up in the gestures he employs in the concert," the doyen observed.

An Isai Perarignar, Somu had served in the Experts Panel of Tamil Isai Sangham, Madras and was a recipient of titles and awards among which Kalaimamani, Sangeetha Chakravarthy, Padmashri were noteworthy. A visiting professor in the Tamil University of Thanjavur, Somu was conferred upon a Doctor of Literature by the Annamalai University when Shanmukhananda Sabha and sister institutions in Bombay felicitated him.

VERSATILE VOLETI

Closely followed the shattering news of Voleti Venkateswarulu's death (at 62) making the music world poorer.

Voleti was a musician of rare qualities. Unassuming and uninhibited, he was least affected by the size of the audience. A packed house or a near-empty hall — it all meant the same. Once he commenced, he entered the realm of melody; it was 'Nada' that he got himself into. There would be only music of Sukhabhava, a stream of melody, gyrating through modes magnificent and mellifluous.

The shimmering resonance in his voice, the perfect Sruti alignment, and the effortless ease with which he sang endeared him to his listeners. There was a thematic perception in his renditions, be it alapana, Kriti rendition, Niraval or Swaraprasas. He was a regular performer at the Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Sabha.

"It is Nadaloludai that is Brahmanandam and not Sanmanaloludai", he often used to say. Material gains were of little avail to him. He was content to be within the confines of the AIR and propagated music the world over. His "Sangeetha Sikshana" series could not be easily forgotten. How many have benefited from the feature! His students in that respect would be countless!

Yet the man in Voleti was not blind to the world and the modern society. "We are not Tyagaraja or Dikshitar who could immerse in music throughout. We have to earn our bread and live in an environment where problems abound. But problems of everyday life would confront you, whether you are a king or a pauper. They could still be overcome and the highest happiness reached if one attuned one's mind to the arts". That was the philosophy he followed.

Interestingly, he was not averse to one specialising in academics as well as arts. That is necessary in the modern world, he would say.

"What is essential is innate talent. If one were intelligent and had a talent for arts pursuing two streams would be no problem." A graduate in music he had his advanced training from Dr. S. Pinakapani who was himself a medico-musician.

The teacher's duty is to mould the talent and give proper direction. It is the student who should learn, listen, assimilate and form his own style. Voleti conceived of a 'memory bank' — by which one could notate nuances, marking with one's own signs and symbols, rare prayogas that struck one from time to time or one heard — which would come handy sometimes. "After all, it is not possible to have imagination fertile and fresh everytime. At any 'drought' phase the memory bank would come to the rescue." The December season would miss yet another maestro.

TOWER OF STRENGTH

The untimely death of Shri T. V. Chidambaram in December 1989 came as another shock.

He had a long innings as the Registrar of Bombay University. Besides, he was a tower of strength for many educational and social causes and Institutions.

It is noteworthy that the Shanmukhananda Sabha's Sangeetha Vidyalaya could get recognition of the Bombay University for its Diploma Course in Karnatak Vocal Classical (KVC), during his tenure.

R. S.

THE SOOTHING ARTS

The Duchess of Atholl, M.P., addressed a meeting in Edinburgh on "The Value of Music in Education." She said:

"I fly to Bach when I am troubled or distressed. Five minutes of Bach is a great tonic. Music can lift us to heights far above this earthly sphere. Music shows us the human soul and can reach out to something infinitely greater than what we are accustomed to see and hear around us."

"... Singing makes you good-tempered. It is difficult, if not impossible to sing when you are angry. I cannot imagine any better way of learning to concentrate on work or learning accuracy than the study of a musical instrument: ... Bach's music seems to me like an ideal debating society, where everyone is good-mannered in discussion, everyone gets a fair hearing, and a conclusion is reached which is satisfactory to everyone."

— THE HINDU, Sept., 1932.

தியாகையரும் கோபாலகிருஷ்ண பாரதியும்

“கூபா நிதி ...” என்று தாஸ்தாயி ரிஷபத்தில் கார்வை கொடுத்து அடுத்த ஆவர்த்தனத்தில் அவ்விடம் வரும் வரை ரிஷபத்திலேயே ரிங்கித்து, மேற்கொண்டு “இவரைப் போல கிடைக்குமோ இத்தர னியில்! சபாபதிக்கு வேறு தெய்வம் சமாள மாருமா - தில்லை” என்று பாடினால் யார் தான் அவ் வாபோகியின் நாதவெள்ளத்தில் கரையமாட்டார்கள்? இது ஆபோகியின் மகிமை யா அல்லது ஸாஹித்தியத்தின் கவையா என்று ஆராயப் புகுந்தால் அந்த ஆராய்ச்சியின் ரணையே மட்டமாகிவிடும். இந்தப் பத்திப் பிரவாகத்தில் ஸங்கீதமும், ஸாஹித்தியமும், ராகமும், லயமும் ஒருங்கே ஊற்றெடுத்திருக்கிறது.

கோபாலகிருஷ்ண பாரதியாரின் காவியப் படைப்பான இக் கீர்த்தனம் எவ்வாறு, எப்பொழுது ஊற்றுப் பெருக்கெடுத்தது என்று கண்டறிய விழைந்தோமானால் பல உண்மைகள் புலனாகும். மகான்களின் சங்க மம், வாக்மேயக்காரரின் ஞான, த்யானபலம், அவர் பக்தி மார்க்கத் திருப்பம் என ஸங்கீ தத்தின் பல சகாப்த மகிமைகள் வெளிவரும். இத்தகைய பேருண்மையை கோபால கிருஷ்ண பாரதியின் சிஷ்யரும், அன்னரின் வரலாற்றை வடித்த மகா மகோபாத்யாய டாக்டர் உ. வே. சாமிநாதையர் கண்ட நிந்துகருகிறார்:

மாயூரத்தில் காவேரிக்கு வடகரையி லுள்ள வள்ளலார் கோயிலில் எழுந்தருளி யிருக்கும் ஸ்ரீ நக்ஷத்ரமூர்த்தி சந்நிதியில் ஏகாத்மமாக, பாரதியார் ஒவ்வொரு நாளும் தவறாமல் தியானமும் யோகமும் செய்து வந்தார்.

இங்ஙனம் இருந்து வருகையில் திருவை யாற்றில் ஸ்ரீ தியாகையருடைய கீர்த்தனங் களும் அவருடைய ராமபக்தியின் சிறப்பும் எங்கும் பரவியிருத்தலைக் கண்டு அப் பெரி யாரை எவ்வாறேனும் தரிசிக்க எண்ணி ஒரு நாள் திருவையாறு சென்று ஸ்ரீ தியாகை யரை அவர் இல்லத்திலேயே தரிசித்தார்.

அவர் இவரை முன்பு பாராதவராத லால் “எந்த ஊர்?” என்று விசாரித்தார். இவர் “தாஸன் மாயூரம்” என்றார்.

அங்கே கோபாலகிருஷ்ண பாரதி, யென்று ஒரு சங்கீத வித்வான் இருக்கிற ராமே, தெரியுமா? அவர் சொல்கியமாக இருக்கிறாரா? என்று அம் மகான் வினவ, “தாஸன் தான்” எனப்பாரதியார் பணிவுடன் பரிந்தார்.

இவரது அடக்கம் தியாகையரை வியப் புக்கடலில் ஆழ்த்தியது. அவ்வமயம் தியா கையரின் சிஷ்யர்கள் ஆபோகி ராகத்தில் அவர் இயற்றிய “ஸ்ரீ ராமஸ்தா அலங்கார ஸவருபா” கீர்த்தனையைப் பாடிக்கொண் டிருந்தார்கள். அவர்கள் முடித்ததும் தியாகையர் பாரதியாரை “நீங்கள் இந்த ராகத்தில் ஏதேனும் கீர்த்தனை செய்திருக் கிறீர்களா?” என்று வினவினார்.

மௌனம்தான் இவர் தந்த பதில்.

தவிர, முதுமையுடைய தியாகையர் யாதொரு பற்றுமின்றித் தம் மாணக்கர்களு டன் ஸ்ரீ ராமபிரானின் புகழைப் பாடுவதி லும், பாடுவதற்குக் கேட்பதிலுமே தம் காலத்தைச் செலுத்தி வருவதை அறிந்து

மனமுருகினார். ஓர் சிறிய வீட்டிலிருந்து கொண்டு பக்தியுடன் துதிக்கும் இன்னிசை இந் நாடெல்லாம் பரவி முழங்குவது அவ ருடைய பக்தியின் சிறப்பினாலேதானென் பதை நன்கு உணர்ந்தார். ஞான நெறியிற் செலுத்திய சிந்தையையுடைய இவருக்கு இறைவனின் பெரும் புகழைக் கீர்த்தனை வடிவமாகச் செய்யும் தொண்டைக் காட்டி லும் சிறந்த தொண்டு வேறில்லை என்றிருந்த எண்ணம் வலிவு பெற்றது.

அன்று மாலை பாரதியார் ஆலயஞ் சென்று ஸ்ரீ பிரணதார்த்திஹாரையும் தர்மஸம்வர்த்தனியையும் தரிசித்து தியா கையர் வினாவிலேயே மனம் ஒன்றியிருந் தார். பிறகு அம் மகான் சிஷ்யர்கள் பாடிய கீர்த்தனத்தை அடியொற்றி இவர் அன்றி ரவே ஒரு கீர்த்தனம் இயற்றினார். அதுவே “சபாபதிக்கு வேறு தெய்வம்”

மறுநாள் தியாகையர் முன்னிலையில் தயக்கத்துடனும், பணிவுடனும் “தாஸன் இயற்றிய கீர்த்தனமொன்றை இப்பொழுது பாடிக் காட்டலாமா” என்று விண்ணப்பித் துக் கொண்டார். “அப்படியே, முன்பு உங்க ளுடைய சில கீர்த்தனங்களைப் பாடிக் கேட்டு மகிழ்ந்திருக்கிறேன். ஆயினும் உங்கள் கீர்த்தனத்தை நீங்களே பாடக் கேட்பது ஒரு விசேஷமல்லவா?”

பாரதியார் பாடினார்.

மகிழ்ச்சியின் மிகுதியில் தியாகையர் “நேற்று நான் கேட்டபொழுது ஒன்றும் சொல்லவில்லையே” என்றார்.

“இதற்கு முன் ஆபோகியில் ஒன்றும் செய்ததில்லை. நேற்று இரவு யோசித்துச் செய்தேன். எல்லாம் அவ்விடத்து ஆசீர்வாத

விசேஷமே, குற்றமிருப்பின் ஷுமிக்க வேண் டும்” என்று பணிவுடன் உரைத்து நின்றார்.

இவருடைய ஸாகித்திய சக்தியையும், ஸங்கீத ஞானத்தையும், நடராஜ பக்தியை யும் உணர்ந்து, மகிழ்ந்து, பாராட்டி, ஆசீர் வதித்தார் தியாகையர். அப் பெருமானின் ஆசீர்வாத பலம் இவருக்கு ஒரு ஊக்கத்தை உண்டாக்கிற்று.

தியாகையர் மகானிடம் விடைபெற்று மாயூரம் திரும்பிய நாளிலிருந்து இவரின் இயற்றிய பலம் அதிகரித்தது. அம் மகானின் கீர்த்தனைகள் போலவே தமிழில் பல கீர்த்த னங்களை வித்வான்கள் சிலர் வேண்டுகோ ளுக்கிணங்கி இயற்றினார். அவைகளில் கன ராக பஞ்சரத்தினங்களைப் பின்பற்றி இவர் இயற்றிய ஐந்து கீர்த்தனைகள் விசேஷமாகக் குறிப்பிடத்தக்கவை. இவை முறையே “ஹரிஹர சிவசங்கர கருணாகர பரமேசுவர” (நாட்டை), “சரணாகதியென்று நம்பி வத் தேன்” (கௌளை), “பிறவாத முத்தியைத் தாரும்” (ஆரபி), “மறவாமல் எப்படியும் நினை மனமே” (ஸ்ரீ) இவைகளைக் கேட்டிருக் கிறேன்” என்கிறார் உ. வே. சாமிநாத அய்யர். இவர் நாட்டைக் கீர்த்தனம் “ஐகதானந்தகாரகா” என்பதற்குப்பிரதியாக இயற்றியது.

தவிர “ஸ்ரீ தியாகையர் இயற்றி யவை ஸ்ரீ ராமபிரான் விஷயமாக இருப் பவை. அவற்றைப் பாடக் கேட்ட சில பக்திச் செல்வம் வாய்ந்தவர்களுக்கு இவர் சிவபரமாக இயற்றிய கீர்த்தனங்கள் அள வற்ற மகிழ்ச்சியை அளித்தன, அன்றியும் தமிழில் எளிய நடையில் அமைந்திருந்தவின் இக் கீர்த்தனங்களை வகுத்தமிழ்நி யாவரும் மனமும் செய்து பாடுவாராயினர்.”

தொகுப்பு : கின்னரி

கலை மலர்

பொள்ளாச்சி தமிழிசைச் சங்கம் பதினெட்டாம் ஆண்டு விழா மலர்,
டிசம்பர், 1988

எல்லா 'மலர்'களைப் போல் இதுவும் ஒரு ஆண்டு மலர்தான். பொள்ளாச்சி தமிழிசைச் சங்கத்தின் 18 வது ஆண்டு மலர். ஆயின் மற்றவையினும் மேம்பட்டு தனி ஒளி வீசி நிற்கிறது. இத்தனைக்கும் ஆண்டு மலரில் வரும் சங்க வருடாந்தர நிகழ்ச்சிகள், புனைப் படங்கள், தவிர விசேஷ ஆராதனைகள் முதலிய விவரங்கள், எளிம்புரங்கள் இதிலும் நிரம்பியுள்ளன. பின் இதன் மகத்துவம்தான் என்ன?

'அடல்ட்' ஆகிவிட்டது மட்டுமல்ல. சாதாரணமாக வரும் ஒன்றிரண்டு கட்டுரைகளுடன் நிற்காமல் ஒரு கட்டுரைக் கொத்தே, களஞ்சியமே, அளித்திருக்கிறது. முத்தமிழின் முந் 'நாடி'யான இயல், இசை, நாடகத்தின் கனவயான 'சரித்திரக் கட்டங்கள்' மனதைக் கவருகின்றன. மலருக்கே பிரத்தியேகமாக எழுதப்படவில்லையாயினும் கட்டுரைத் தொகுப்பு — ஆசிரியர்கள் ஆற்றல், கலை வள்ளல்களின் சாதனைகள் ஆராய்ச்சி மாணவர்களுக்குக் கையிற் கிடைத்த பொக்கிஷம். சாமானியருக்கு சரித்திர ஏடுகளைத் திருப்பிப்படிக்கும் புனகம் ஏற்படுகிறது.

'நாடகத் தமிழின் நல்லாசிரியராக' கவாமி சங்கரதாஸை வடித்திருக்கும் சிஷ்யன், அமரர் டி. கே. ஷண்முகத்தின் சித்திரமும், அன்னரின் தமிழிசை மாணக்கர் பட்டியலை ஏந்தி நிற்கும் டி.என். சிவதானுவின் கட்டுரையும், "நாடகப் பணி" அருணகிரி ஸந்தனிக்கும் "முத்தமிழ் வளர்த்த முன்னோடிகளும்" பல விளக்கங்களை நமக்குத் தெரிவிக்கின்றன.

"கூத்து நிலையில் இருந்த தமிழ் நாடகத்திற்கு கலை வடிவம் கொடுத்து ஒழுங்குபடுத்தியவர் தவத்திரு சங்கரதாஸ் சுவாமிகள்."

"தமிழ் நாடகத்திற்கு இலக்கணம் கண்டு, இலக்கிய அர்த்தத்து கொடுத்து மேடையேற்றியவர் தமிழ் நாடகப் பேராசிரியர் பரீதிமார் கலைஞர்."

"மக்கள் மத்தியிலே மட்டுமல்ல, மக்கள் மடிக்கே நாடகக் கலையைக் கொண்டுவந்த மாபெரும் சாதனையாளர் பம்மல் சம்பந்தூர்."

இதனை அருதியாகக் கொண்ட கட்டுரையின் நடையும், கருத்தும், வளமும் எப்படியென்று ஊக்கக்கலாம்.

கோவை வானொலி ஒலி பாப்பிய பேராசிரியர் அமுதனின் "திருக்குறளில் காதல்" எவ்வளவு பேர் கேட்டிருப்பார்கள்? அதேபோல் ஸி. எஸ். ராஜுவின் "தமிழிசை வளர்த்த பெரியோர்" கலை வெள்ளத்துடன் ஓடும் ஒரு சரித்திர இசையாற்றை எத்தனை கலைஞர்கள் சித்தரிக்க முன்வந்திருப்பார்கள்? தொல்காப்பியத் திலிருந்து லால்குடி ஜெயராமன் வரை தமிழ் இசைக் கர்த்தாக்களின் 'சேவை' மிக அமைதியான ஓட்டத்தில் இயங்குகிறது.

மேலும் தஞ்சை இருநாத நாயக்கன் அரசவையில் இசை-நாட்டிய மரபு களைப் பற்றி டாக்டர் மூட்டூரி சங்கமேசம் அவர்களின் தெலுங்கு கட்டுரையின் தமிழாக்கம் வாசகர்களின் கலை ஆர்வத்தைத் தூண்டுகிறது.

நிர்க், அமரர் நேருஜியின் நூற்றாண்டு நினைவாஞ்சலி கட்டுரையும் அமரர் கி. வா. ஜ. ஸ்ரீநேக இம்மலரை அர்ப்பணித்து, அன்னார் பணியை வர்ணித்த கட்டுரையும் இலக்கிய நயத்தைப் பெருக்குகிறது.

ஆக, இது வெறும் ஆண்டு மலரல்ல, கலை மலர் என்றால் பொருந்துமல்லவா! இதற்கு விடையில்லை, ஆயினும் இது ஒரு விடையில்லா மாணிக்கம்.

இம் மலரை வெளியிட்ட சங்க நிர்வாகிகளுக்கு வாசகர்களின் நன்றி.

சு. ரா.